



**MINISTRY OF  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
OF DENMARK**  
*Danida*



## **MAKUENI COUNTY GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP WITH AGRIFI FOOD SAFETY PROGRAMME YIELDS GREAT RESULTS!**

### ***Modalities of rolling out AgriFI Food Safety in Makueni County***

In 2018, the AgriFI Programme was launched in Kenya with the Food Safety component set to be implemented in 13 counties. Makueni County Government was onboarded by MESPT to implement the Food Safety Programme funded by the European Union and Danida the same year. The programme rollout modalities were documented in a memorandum of understanding and both MESPT and Makueni county identified and agreed on areas of collaboration and partnership within the programme period.

The 2 result areas of the AgriFI food safety programme would be implemented in the county. The implementation of the ATVET model at the Makueni Kwa Kathoka ATC was top on the agenda. Based on the premise that there is a skill-set gap among value chain actors that has affected the competitiveness of agricultural value chains, lack of coordination and harmony in the dissemination of the required skills and knowledge to value chain actors and that food safety had not been of priority in the dissemination of skills and knowledge gaps, the decision to revamp Makueni -Kwa Kathoka ATC to a centre of excellence in training agriculture within the county was firmed up.

### ***Revamping of Makueni Kwa Kathoka Agricultural Training Centre (ATC)***

Started in 2012 by the National Government under the Ministry of Agriculture, Makueni - Kwa Kathoka Agricultural Training Centre was devolved to Makueni County in 2013. It only had the administration block and the pit latrines then, but the county government added classrooms, a conference hall, a dining hall, a kitchen, 15 self-contained hostels, and a borehole with the piping and 2 10-cubic water tanks installed for use on the modern toilets that were constructed.

The ATCs' mandate is to offer training to farmers and youth through a skills-based approach that translates to the development of agriculture within Makueni County. This was lacking as the center did not have adequate demonstration sites to showcase the latest appropriate agricultural technologies.

From May 2019, MESPT AgriFI commenced its support to the institution on different levels that include, infrastructural development such as renovation and upgrade of the computer room, installation of 10 brand new computers with complementing power backup, and workstations to become an information resource center. The information center also had internet connectivity installed and the Wi-Fi has enabled learners and trainers to access important information as well as gain computer skills critical for the job market.

Apart from the resource center upgrade, the training hall was partitioned into two classrooms to hold concurrent training. One of the halls was installed with an overhead projector and each of them with a dropdown screen, a whiteboard, and furnished with modern seats to provide comfort during training.



**MINISTRY OF  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
OF DENMARK**  
*Danida*



Additional infrastructure support also entails the construction of a modern zero-grazing unit to facilitate practical training for the dairy development and management course. In addition, the unit is an income-generating investment whereby the center will sell its milk and plow back the income to help in advancing further training.

Through a partnership with MESPT's AgriFI Programme, Makueni Kwa Kathoka ATC is also now able to offer Competency-Based Education and Training and award recognized certificates after its accreditation as an Agricultural technical and vocational education and training (ATVET) centre offering ATVET courses. This elevation of the training center has made it an attractive center of learning and by the time of this case study development, Makueni Kwa Kathoka had the Anglican Development Services (ADS) Eastern commit support to sponsor 115 learners who had expressed interest to be trained differently in courses at the center.

Another practical site for training that had been established by MESPT through the AgriFI programme was the 1-acre tree horticulture nursery which is also well fenced. The Tree nursery is accessible to the locals and will go a long way in ensuring the production of clean and quality planting seedlings for the farmers in Makueni County and beyond. Additionally, the center will train farmers and the youth in horticulture which is another course the center was accredited to offer. The skill-based training in horticulture demonstrates how to establish a fruit tree nursery or even a forest nursery with the end goal of increasing the forest cover in support of the Makueni county Government's agenda of tackling climate change.

### ***Implementation of food safety policies***

Through the AgriFI food safety programme, Makueni county is counted as one of the counties that are ahead of the pack when it comes to food safety implementation due to its significant investments in food safety matters so far. The county governor Prof. Kivutha Kibwana has been at the forefront of supporting and closely monitoring the implementation of the food safety agenda in the county.

In 2020, a committee was initiated to create awareness and promote food safety for the nutrition and health of consumers. There existed concerns of contamination and diseases associated with the quality of food consumed especially the hygiene and safety of the food in terms of handling at the farm level, and transportation level including its preparation and consumption. As a result, the county in partnership with the programme established a food safety committee that meets quarterly to review and discuss certain agendas around food safety. The committee was established with the support of the AgriFI programme which also has been helping it to roll out its operationalization.

In an interview with the County's Director of Livestock and Fisheries, Mr. David Musyoki, the county's food safety committee has made a significant contribution to the agenda such as being involved in the drafting of the food safety bill and was in the process of embedding some of the activities in the County Integrated Development plan. He was confident that even if AgriFI exits, the committee was rest assured that the county would continue investing significantly in the food safety model because it is beyond the



**MINISTRY OF  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
OF DENMARK**  
*Danida*



programme and focuses on ensuring that Makueni residents and those who get their food from the county remain healthy by consuming safe food.

Makueni county acknowledged the need to have a regulatory framework that brings different players together to address food safety. The county has in place policies and guidelines that guide the process of implementing food safety. The County Technical Food safety committee is keen on matters of nutrition, food production, and food safety. They engage value chain actors to help them establish hygiene, sanitary and phytosanitary mechanisms in the input system, handling system, and marketing channels to entrench the necessary practice. From the analysis done so far, they have a sensitization and awareness strategy and have also onboarded different partners as change agents. The committee has a traceability mechanism for the products availed in the markets – where and how has it been grown and the quality of the product.

Ultimately, the committee is encouraging people to embrace and appreciate healthy foods. This perspective is however challenged by factors such as seasonal drought which shifts focus to just getting food while neglecting the safety bit.

Finally, the county ToTs have been sensitizing and training food business operators to ensure that the articles of food meet the food safety requirements at all stages of production, distribution, and storage. The emphasis is that they adhere to the general hygiene and sanitary practices as well as carry out their food business within set standard operating procedures, rules, and regulations set by the regulating government competent authorities in the interest of public health. Farmer's awareness of the chemicals that have been banned due to the environmental and health effects has also been a priority area. The cooperatives that market farmers produce are also targeted through training to ensure that they sell consumers clean and healthy foods.

There are other great strides made in the county regarding food safety measures such as the training of 26 inspectors in horticulture, dairy, and aquaculture value chains. Future plans include entrenching the matters of food safety in the budget process so that it becomes a strategy whose activities they own and appreciate. The committee also drafted the ATVET bill which will enable the Makueni Kwa Kathoka center to become semi-autonomous and hence be able to operate more optimally.